

Governor Henry Lippitt House
199 Hope Street
Providence
Providence County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-239

HABS
RI,
4-PROV,
136-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

GOVERNOR HENRY LIPPITT HOUSE

Address: 199 Hope Street, Providence, Providence County,
Rhode Island. Plat 13, Lot 185.

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4-PROV,
136-

Present Owner
and Occupant: Mrs. Mary L. H. Doolittle

Present Use: Residence

Brief Statement
of Significance: This large, elaborately decorated house, was
built for Henry Lippitt, governor of Rhode Island
in 1874-1875.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners:

1851 Sally Thompson sells for \$5000 to Henry Lippitt a certain lot of land bounded: W by Hope Street 135'; N by Angall Street 259-1/2'; E by Elizabeth Waterman 190'; S by grantor, and William R. Watson and Moses B. Ives trustees of Elizabeth Rogers 258'... it being lot "A" on plat of Estate owned by heirs of Nathan and Rugus Waterman platted in 1847 by Atwater and Schubarth..Plat Book #3, page 32 - Deed Book 122, page 252, in Providence City Hall.

1876 Henry Lippitt conveys to Arthur A. Simmons all my Homestead Estate and is the same lot conveyed to grantor by Sally Thompson in 1851 together with DWELLING HOUSE stable, and all other buildings and improvements. Also all furniture, books, paintings, statuary, household effects and goods of every name and nature contained in said Dwelling House. - Deed Book 302, page 266, in Providence City Hall.

1879 Arthur A. Simmons conveys to Mary Ann Lippitt the above property "being the same conveyed to me by deed from Henry Lippitt of even date." - Deed Book 305, page 42, in Providence City Hall.

The property was listed as belonging to the following persons in the year designated:

1854 Henry Lippitt
1879 Mary A. Lippitt wid of Henry Est.
1911 Mary B. L. Steedman and Abby F. L. Hunter
1947 Mary L. H. Doolittle

2. Date of erection: 1862-1865
3. Architect: Henry Childs
4. Builder, suppliers, etc. See Supplemental Material below.

B. Supplemental Material: The following information is extracted from a manuscript notebook kept by William Binney, the original owner, now in possession of the present owner, entitled--"Memo --contract & agreements for Materials & Labor, New House on Hope Street, 1863, Henry Lippitt, Providence, R. I.:"

"Contracted with Messrs Carpenter & Childs of Providence to do all the carpentry work on the New Brick House on Hope Street which I am about to build on the following terms and conditions:

"They agree to furnish good & competent workman such as may be satisfactory to me in all respects, and to charge me one shilling per day profit over the prices they have to pay said workmen, it is understood that Mr. Peabody is to have charge of all the work on the House, Masonry work as well as carpentry, and to keep all the time of the Laborers and Mechanics, to look after the use of the Materials, and to have a general over sight of the whole work, for which he is to be paid \$ per day. All the Lumber and other Materials bought for the house are to be charged at Cash, Mr. Carpenters time occupied in purchasing or procuring said Materials and Stock is to be paid for at the rate of \$2-- per day and all Expenses actually incurred by him in Travelling and looking after the Materials are to be paid by me. Mr. Childs it is agreed will make all the Drawings necessary for the Erection and completion of the House but will make no charge for the drawings for the original plans and Elevations of the Building, when those are adopted and finished and the work commenced, H will charge at the rate of Two Dollars per day for all time actually Employed by him in making the working Drawings or arranging and assisting in the progress of the work."

Providence
December 1862.

"Masonry contract with Messers Wm. Andrews & Son - Feb. 11, 1863
Contract for Bldg. stone with Richard Fenner, Cranston, Feb. 1863.
Contract for Lime with Stephen Wright, Lime Rock, R. I. Feb. 10, 1863
Lumber contracts:

framing lumber--Spruce, pine, hemlock, chestnut.
finish lumber: clear pine, hard pine, oak, cherry, curled maple,
black walnut, ash, rock maple, butternut.

Finish for Rooms--

Drawing Room--Light woods, rock maple, poplar or other white wood
with black walnut or butternut mouldings.

Reception Room--maples, rock and curled with panels of Byrds Eye &c.

Library--Black walnut with black cherry mouldings.
Dining Room--Oak or Butternut with cherry mouldings and panels.
Billiard Room--ash stiles, chestnut panels & cherry moldings.
Main Hall & Stairways 1st & 2nd floor--light & dark western Oak with Butternut or black walnut mouldings.
Doors on 1st floor--Black walnut Stiles, maple panels, butternut mouldings.
Doors on 2nd & 3rd floors--ash, with chestnut panels or all chestnut and cherry mouldings.
Spare chamber--all Black walnut chamber
Chamber over the Billiard Room--maple & black walnut mouldings.
Sewing Room--Cherry with ash or chestnut panel &c.
All other Rooms on 2nd floor--Chestnut with black walnut mouldings.
All the closets & rooms on 3rd floor & closets on 2nd ditto & addition building--chestnut.
Kitchen & closet & back entry--Hard pine
Butling Room & water closet--Ash & black walnut

Marble for mantels

Rose Pyrenees marble
Black marble
Statuary marble Louis 16th style for Dining Room
Lisbon Marble, red spots
Pink Vermont Marble
Green " "

"Final contract dated May 1865 for the two stained glass windows at the stair landings with William Gibson, Corner Broadway & 13th Streets, New York."

Prepared by Antoinette F. Downing and Elvira Cowdey
for the Providence Preservation Society
and Osmund R. Overby, Architect
National Park Service
May 1962.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This is a large brick house, with elaborate detail and ornament on the interior and the exterior, one of the few known works of the Providence architect, Henry Childs.

2. Condition of fabric: Good. Partly furnished with original furnishings.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: About 60' (three-bay west front) x 75' main block with projecting center bay on front and semicircular bay on south side, three stories, large two-story rear wing on east.

2. Foundations: Regular ashlar brownstone.

3. Wall construction: Brick, brownstone quoins on first floor continue as slightly projecting brick pilasters on upper two floors, which meet similar brick entablature under cornice, enframing walls. Double brownstone belt courses between first and second floors with balusters under the windows simulating balconies.

4. Porches: Semicircular entrance porch with Corinthian columns, fluted and cabled; entablature with balustrade, modillion cornice, and carved frieze. Porte-cochere on north side with paneled square columns, paneled entablature, cornice similar to roof cornice, but with balustrade.

5. Chimneys: Brick chimneys in outside walls.

6. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: Wide main entrance doors with segmental arched head, paneled double doors, paneled jambs, transom light, heavy moldings. North side: Four-panel wood door with segmental arched top in deep brick opening.

b. Windows: Four over four light double hung windows. Molded brownstone frames, sills on brackets, cornices on first and second floors, segmental heads on third floor. Tri-partite window on second floor over main entrance porch, brownstone trim with Corinthian columns and pilasters, frieze similar to porch below, pediment over central window.

7. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: Hip roofs except for pedimented gable roof over projecting center bay on west front, sheet metal roof with standing seams.

b. Cornice: Molded cornice with carved modillions, two rows of bed mold with band of egg and dart and dentil course.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: L-shape central hall leading west to front door and north to porte-cochere - stairway in north leg of the hallway. Three rooms on south side, reception room, library with curved bay, dining room - all open to hall and connected by double doors. Large drawing room on northwest, billiard room at northeast, kitchen in rear wing. Central hall 11'-4" wide, first floor ceiling 13' high. Bedrooms on upper floors.

2. Stairways: U-shape with landings, 54" wide, 13' treads, 6-1/2" risers, closed string, heavy railing with molded rail, turned balusters, carved and paneled newels.

3. Flooring: Patterned hardwood floors.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Elaborately paneled wainscoting in most rooms. Plaster walls and ceilings, many marbleized, grained or painted in patterns of dark rich colors.
5. Doors and doorways: Six-panel doors with segmental heads, molded doorways, paneled jambs, complex heavily relieved moldings.
6. Trim: Paneled interior shutters, complex ceiling cornices and paneling, light plaster detail in drawing room. Elaborate built-in furniture, notably in dining room. Stained glass windows at stair landings.
7. Lighting: Original elaborate gas lanterns in place - converted to electricity.
8. Hardware: Mortise locks, silver plated knobs, butt hinges.
9. Heating: Central hot air. Elaborate marble mantels in various colors, some with large overmantel mirrors, some with wood enframements around marble facings.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: Faces west at the southeast corner Angell and Hope Streets, set back about 30' from sidewalk on north and west sides, garden on south, driveway and service yard on west.
2. Enclosures: Lot elevated above sidewalk, slopes up steeply from low brownstone wall at sidewalk on north and west sides.
3. Outbuildings: Brick garage at southeast corner of lot.
4. Landscaping: Informal with lawn, trees, flowers and shrubs.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby, Architect
National Park Service
May 1962